

THE QUESTION OF ANARCHO-CAPITALIST REVOLUTION

(As taken from the upcoming second edition of the manifesto of the First Cell of the Underground Revolutionary Anarcho-capitalist Movement, U.S.A.)

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DOES NOT THE IDEA OF "REVOLUTION" CONTRADICT THE LIBERTARIAN PROHIBITION AGAINST THE INITIATION OF FORCE? THUS, WOULD NOT AN ANARCHO-CAPITALIST REVOLUTION DESTROY THE VERY PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM IT ASPIRES TO ACHIEVE?

For us, revolution does not necessitate the violation of rights and that is the essential ethical question. We do not regard the use of force in our self-defense against the State's violence as an initiation of force. The individuals who run the State are constantly and systematically violating our rights. By their actions, and by their clearly expressed intent, they have, beyond any reasonable doubt, demonstrated an unwillingness to desist from robbery, extortion, slavery and murder on a broad scale. Thus, it should be totally and incontestably clear to any rational observer, that those persons who operate governments have morally forfeited any claim to immunity from the retaliatory use of force by their victims or, for that matter, anyone choosing to forcefully oppose this criminal institution. Those who operate the State, or willingly aid it, are fair game for those whose rights have been infringed. Persons have the moral right to organize, not only in their own immediate self-defense against this aggressor, but also to pursue the complete eradication of any and all statist institutions. The State occupies no special immunity. Actions committed in its name have invalidated any constitutional legitimacy it ever may have enjoyed.

The idea of revolution as a necessary conflict to attain basic human rights was originated in the American war for independence against the British Empire. Since that time, the concept has been often misappropriated and misapplied, but the essential idea that persons have an unalienable right to forcefully oppose the immoral use of force by a governing power is the essential idea which has survived the test of time. In spite of the confusion of premises, the terrible excesses committed and tragic consequences of many "revolutions", the idea of retaliatory individual sovereignty against a governing order remains the unique invention of the American Revolution and the driving force of world politics over the past two centuries.

The overthrow of the State by force of arms, not merely as a rebellion to continue the same institutions with new rulers, but as a fundamental political change required by ethical-philosophical discovery in the theory of human rights is a libertarian phenomenon. Revolution, as contradistinct from rebellion, is a libertarian invention. The historical tragedy, thus, is not revolution per se but the usurpation of the idea by philosophical reactionaries facilitated by the default of libertarians.

Contemporary revolutionary activity is the progressive consequence of the natural rights theory discovered in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. In spite of distortions and gross misuse by Marxists and other neo-feudal reactionaries, revolution will continue in one form or another

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until the State is eventually abolished. The ultimate logical consequence of natural rights theory is anarcho-capitalism which unequivocally demands absolute personal sovereignty, the abolition of all statist institutions and proclaims uncompromising revolutionary war against the ruling class.

As long as libertarians continue to shirk their role as the only legitimate leaders of world revolutionary forces and continue their unsavory affiliation with conservatives, and residual archist elements (de facto conservatives) they will never regain their role in what is a natural and necessary process. State power and the contradictions which ineluctably accompany its functioning can only be resolved through revolution and not through reform. Any reform which stabilizes State power merely rearranges oppression and redistributes the pattern of the ruling class - the result is always statism in another form. Thus, reform for the sake of reform without a revolutionary context constitutes a betrayal of the oppressed. The ruling class escapes justifiable retaliation and the apparatus of violence remains intact. Revolution, thus, must continue. Conservative reformism is anathema to authentic libertarian requirements.

Socialist "revolution" which reinstitutes the State and new ruling classes is permitted and engendered by the historical default of libertarian intellectuals. The continuance of this default is a shameful tragedy. Although indeed individual libertarians are not responsible for the actions of left "revolutionaries", the libertarian intellectual tradition which has failed to objectively treat the option of revolution is profoundly at fault. The continued silence on this question by leading intellectuals constitutes a failure of nerve or worse yet, a possible deliberate betrayal of an authentic anarcho-capitalist cause.

Revolution as practiced by a revolutionary organization dedicated to the consistent respect for the legitimate rights of all individuals and the overriding objective of dismantling the State, does not include terrorist acts harming innocents. Revolution can and should be conducted with surgical precision. But the possibility for accidentally harming innocent bystanders should not deter the general pursuit of attacks against expedient targets to achieve military and political objectives. Nearly every area of human enterprise involves some potential risks to the doer and to others. Risk is not, however, a significant moral argument and even less does it constitute an ethical injunction against pursuing a necessary activity. Just as one would not declare dangerous industrial activities generically immoral merely because fatal accidents may occur including innocent bystanders, one may not logically declare the whole category of defensive, natural-rights corrective, revolutionary activity as prima facie immoral. This is, in fact, what the libertarian intellectual movement has tended to do until now.

Some in the movement who, though willingly accepting our argument as a valid one, offer the emotional challenge that the practice of revolutionary force is bound to change the character of the participants for the worse. They argue that the use of force - even for defense and retaliation against the State - engenders a mentality of violence antithetical to the peaceful, and productive qualities essential to a libertarian way of life. Thus, by a process of elimination they logically exclude any course except for mass education and political reform - a course of action which perfectly fits their lethargy and middle class aspirations - not the natural and logical

requirements of effective anti-statism. We assert that this position is profoundly in error and can only erode the generative capacities of an authentic libertarian mentality - one essential for the flourishing of a libertarian civilization.

It is paramount to the success of any philosophical system that it be lived and acted out in spite of the possible risks and pains. The essential product of adopting a moral standard and pursuing a course of action is one's moral identity. If one is incapable or unwilling to pursue the course of action necessary to effectuate one's moral standard then the result necessarily will be a betrayal of that standard. If the Libertarian movement does not act out its standard, its cause will undoubtedly suffer oblivion. The masses of persons who occupy a philosophically agnostic position will certainly give no trust to those who profess a standard but who are weak in their resolve to act it out. Respect tends to be strong for those who are willing to fight and die for their beliefs - even the wrong beliefs. Over time such acts, however violent and distasteful, achieve a veneer of acceptance for their positions.

Revolution is thus inherently necessary for the adoption and spread of libertarian ideals. Even more significantly, the very practice of revolution in the context of the present statist environment is necessary to the crystallization of a new personality type capable of forging a civilization out of the ruins of the old order. The libertarian personality ideal must not become merely defined as a peaceful producer-creator because in a statist context this is the essence of being a good slave. It must be a personality willing to move from the abstract ideals of individual sovereignty to the awesome battles necessary to win liberty against the might of the ruling class. A personality which shrinks from moral action because of risk and pain is not moral but cowardly. In this condition there would be no philosophy to endanger, merely cowardice and hypocrisy posing as a moral standard. Essentially, this is what exists now in the "Libertarian Movement".

If Libertarians are not prepared even to seriously discuss the option to fight for their rights, how do they expect anyone to believe in the efficacy of personal rights defense in a post-statist society? How can people who wait for their masters to give them back their rights expect to conduct an effective post-statist society even should one fortuitously take place? Once an individual enters a revolutionary conspiracy against the State, the State ceases to exist as anything but a powerful enemy. After all, the main problem of statist power is not its objective physical might, however great that may be; it is the subjective mesmerizing authority which echoes from mind to mind and is psychologically amplified into the grotesque absurdity of men fearing and obeying masters vastly inferior to themselves. A "post-statist" society effectively begins with each individual's conscious willingness to fight the State. In contrast, those who live within the laws of the State and plead for its mercy by their obedient unwillingness to revolt will never be able to create institutions necessary for a post-statist society - even when the State is in fact abolished. Their mentality will be that of slaves without masters. For them it will always be a matter of mere good fortune that their rights remain intact. Freedom can never be given, it must be won! A conscious being must participate in its own liberation to meet the challenges of freedom.

Revolution, in spite of all its risks, its possible excesses and uncertainties is the only significant undertaking available to those rationally concerned with their moral identity within the existing world-historical context. Those who evade reality cannot logically affirm themselves as pursuing an objectively-founded ethic. Much less can they claim to be effective and consistent advocates of liberty. They are just fools fooling themselves but few others. Without anti-statist leadership, the natural process of revolution will continue to sweep the world but only under the evil aegis of various reactionary usurpers. By rejecting the discoveries and inventions of their own authentic heritage, libertarians will have not only forsaken the path to a better world but also assured the degeneration of their own identities as moral beings.

A Note of Further Explanation on Our Position:

This work is not intended for conservatives or minarchists. We don't consider the latter as libertarians. If you count yourself among the ranks of anarcho-capitalists or anarchists and our position sounds too harsh or dangerous then review your own premises and the world situation - see if we are not correct - be honest enough to examine the true basis of your motivations. If you prefer the relative peace of slavery over the risks of revolutionary war against the State then so be it! But don't yap about our moral "inconsistencies". Formulate your thesis and let it be printed side by side with ours in libertarian journals. Tell your editors to stop the censorship of our ideas - let the truth be judged!

For those who want to join our ranks, we promise you nothing except that you will be on the correct road to abolishing the State. We have few means as compared with the Cato Institute, the Libertarian Party or the Mont Pelerin Society financed by the comfortable rich who are able to indulge themselves in endless intellectualism and reformism as permitted by the legal leash of the State. At this time all we have is right on our side. Eventually things will change. The contradictions of the State will aggravate, and with it, the contradictions of the reformists. Whatever gains the LP makes as a vehicle of statist reform will encumber it politically and ideologically from becoming part of an inevitable revolution. As it should be clear by now, abolitionists have little or no effective place in the LP or any such organization except as powerless observers. This kind of reformist vehicle is designed for opportunists of all kinds playing their charade of radicalism while unwittingly(?) protecting the ultimate interests of the governing classes. Don't be duped into harnessing your energy to the farce, to the fraud of a minarchist party.

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